



# The Importance of Trust

Trust is the cornerstone of a successful parent-child relationship. Trust is what gives children confidence that their parents or caregivers will meet their needs. If trust is compromised, children are robbed of the capability to be a secure, hopeful, cheerful, and affectionate person. **MH** explores how to build trust in the parent-child relationship.

WORDS DR NICOLA DAVIES



DID YOU  
KNOW?

Children learn whether they can trust between birth and 18 months – the months when they are most dependent on their parents and caregivers.

**T**he biggest gift parents can give their children is trust. If children learn to trust their parents, it will make a big difference in their current and future lives. Studies have shown that children learn whether they can trust between birth and 18 months – the months when they are most dependent on their parents or caregivers. This building of trust is the child's initial developmental duty during the first 18 months of life. If this basic foundation of trust is missing, children can potentially be mentally and socially handicapped for the remainder of their lives.

Children who get love and protection from their parents have the strongest potential for developing into teenagers and adults who are satisfied, vigorous, and efficient. Studies have also revealed that a relationship with a reliable, firm, and loving adult during the early years is connected in later life with good performance in school, productive behaviors, more beneficial peer relationships, and ease of dealing with life's challenges.

The brains of children develop well when they are surrounded by love and caring – in circumstances in which they can trust their parents or caregivers. On the other hand, ruthless and untrustworthy parenting may impair a child's brain development. Studies have shown that the absence of healthy relationships with a parent can alter a child's body chemistry, leading to a drop in the growth hormones useful for brain and heart development. Additionally, the ability to feel loved is established through experience. If

children are brought up in a neglectful environment, they will be fearful and will find it difficult to trust others later in life.

As a child advances in years, effective parental nurturing is essential for optimal physical and emotional development.

**When parents strive to meet the needs of their children, they are compensated by fulfilling, honest, and trusting relationships with their young ones.**

### Nurturing Trust

Children require love and nurturing to build a trusting bond between them and their parents or caregivers. If this sort of relationship is achieved, they will also establish trusting connections with the community around them, which contributes to their successful development. Providing for children's physical needs alone is not enough, however. In fact, when children's basic physical needs are fulfilled but they are not given attention and care, they can't grow up into healthy adults. The emotional implications of this sort of lack of care can be myriad.

**The best way of nurturing a trusting relationship with children is usually through everyday activities.**

Every occasion can give a parent the chance to show attention and care to their child. Bath time, mealtime, changing diapers, bedtime, or any other day-to-day activities are suitable for nurturing relationships. During such interactions, parents should

continuously speak to and interact with their child. Parents can explain what they are doing while doing it, and illustrate things in the immediate environment to their children. For example, when changing diapers, parents can continuously talk to their children about the experience.

Parents can also ask their child questions, even if the child cannot give answers; maybe the responses will come later! Parents can sing, provide comfort when children are crying, read, or take part in other activities with the child. Furthermore, parents should frequently hug and kiss their children while letting them know they love them. After all, hugs and kisses cannot spoil kids but are important for showing affection and enabling the young ones to feel secure and part of the family.

Importantly, parents should be aware of the tone of voice they use when talking to kids, particularly when they are stressed or worked up. Parents need to be firm to bring up their children in the right manner. However, harsh and uncaring language

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can spark fear, which in turn can compromise trust. It is also important that parents handle issues that come up by using a “problem-solving lens.” If a parent blows up because a child has crushed a toy worth \$150, for example, then future communication is likely to be undermined since the child will not trust the parent to address the problems he may be facing. Instead, parents should be focused on providing solutions. Maybe the damage occurred because of a genuine reason beyond the child’s control. It will be more helpful to the child’s development for the parent to try to find out why the incident occurred.

## Keeping promises is an essential aspect of building trust.

At times, when parents are preoccupied, they can fail to make their promises real. For example, if a parent promises to play with his child after work and fails to do so, it may undermine trust. So, parents should make every effort not to break the promises made to their children.

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### Show You Care

Parents should provide children with responsive care. A good way of achieving this is taking some time to play with children every day so that their mind and senses can be stimulated. Many age-appropriate songs, games, and books are available that can help children enhance their mental and physical strength. Parents should follow the child’s lead during playtime. Children can be over-stimulated or under-stimulated. When children start showing signs of being overwhelmed or tired, they should be permitted to take a break and resume the play later. This way, trust is nurtured with each passing day.

In case they fail to keep a promise, parents should try to make it up by giving apologies, avoiding repeating the same mistakes, and becoming more attentive to the needs of their child.

Logical rules that a child understands can also nurture a trusting relationship. Parents and caregivers who have self-control encourage kids to trust them. If kids can predict how parents will handle particular situations, it will cultivate confidence in their relationship. Rules and duties given to children should be suitable for their age and abilities. For example, if children know that when they do something wrong their parents will discuss it rationally with them, they will be more likely to be honest about their mistakes. A teenager whose

parents didn’t punish him without reason is much more likely to tell the truth than is one who has experienced many unpredictable parental reactions.

### Keep This in Mind

It is during their early years that children learn to trust their parents and those around them. The kind of treatment they get from their parents and other adults plays a critical role in nurturing this trust. Importantly, children who develop a strong foundation of trust will feel secure and confident in the world. Developing trust provides both parents and children with an underlying sense of satisfaction while providing assurance to parents that they have provided a strong foundation for their children to live confidently and productively in the world. 